

A Trip to South America

In the fall of 1869 I was very anxious of going to sea. So I left off work which was at Mr Smiths Upholstering shop in Cambridgeport & went to Boston to a shipping agents office to get a chance on board a merchantman for a short voyage such as to go to the West Indies. But as I was unable to be at the shipping office all of my time I lost several chances, & was the Captain of a vessel going to the office for sailors wishes them to go immediately so as to sign ship articles. As I had lost several chances in this ^{way} & 2 weeks of my time had expired for naught, It made me more determined to go ^{some way}. So one day while at the office I met an agent of an Whaleship in there talking to some of the sailors for to ship aboard his craft to go whaling. At last he came to me & seeing that I was a green hand (or horn) he was a persuading me to go, telling me what nice times they had & all like that. As I then did not care much about how or where I went I readily made agreements for to go. It might

I went home to my boarding house pleased with the
idea of a chance to go. I then discussed the question with
a friend of mine that roomed with me (Mr Miller by
name) to see if he would not like to go with me. Finally
he answered me in the affirmative. (Yes) The next morning
a Wednesday we both went into Boston at the office
on CommercialSt for to see the agent. We then gave
him our names & place of residence onto his shipping
papers when he gave us a glass of beer for friendship
sake & told us to be at the Providence Depot the
next morning at 9 o'clock to take the train for New
Bedford where the Bark Milton^{at her dock} laid. We both then
came home feeling glad once more of a chance of going.
We went around during the evening to see our friends
before going which took us till late in the evening.
When the next morning came we got up early &
had our breakfast ^{and} ~~which we were~~ ^{was} at talking over
the matter in regard of going. After w^e had
eaten, Mr Miller spoke of one more friend he
would like to see & as we had ample time
enough he would like to go & see him, promising
to be back in $\frac{3}{4}$ of an hour. The time came & we

passed but he made no return. At last 1 P.M.
 came but no return. Then I went into Boston for to
 see the agent again & I told him what had
 transpired which he excused me & told me to come
 in again on Saturday for to meet him at the Depot
 for to take the 4 P.M. train. The day came & proved to
 be a ^{rainy} full stormy & I did not care to go. So I postponed
 it untill the next Monday for to take the 7.30 A.M.
 train. It was a delightful morning & after shake-
 ing hands once more around I bid them good bye &
 started on my way for the ship at New Bedford.
 arriving there at 10 A.M. After finding the ship &
 then the ships office I found then that I was too late
 for all hands had signed ship articles on a Saturday
 night. To give it up I would not, so I went around
 the wharfs to find another chance to go a whaling
 & I succeeded in finding another chance on a
 Bark by the name of Edward Everett which was
 a laying in the Dry Dock for repairs being
 satisfied of a chance I came home for to wait 1
 week more for her to be Repaired. I arrived
 home that night at 5 P.M. which surprised the

folks very much to see me come home again without a whale. They told me that Miller was scart of the smell of whale oil therefore he had kept back & had not been seen since, after waiting for that week to go (& it seemed as long as two) I started off for New Bedford for the second time by bidding them good bye. They told me that I would be back again with another whale before a great while, but I told them that it would not be quite so soon again for I was going to stay. This time in going to New Bedford I had to stay another week for to paint her, I was too ashamed to come home this time so I made up my mind to stop at the Harriners home on Chapell St. During the week I signed ship articles & found that I was to have the 19th lay, that is every 19th gallon or barrel I have the value of one of them, the higher the barth the better the lay. Well I got acquainted with a lot of them & we went around together to amuse ourselves & had a good time generally. The home was especially for mariners & it had a chapel ^{side} along of it. Mr & Mrs Figh who had charge of the home were good Christian people. She was real motherly woman & did

what she could to make the home pleasant for us. We often went down into the kitchen when she was at work & have a talk with her, which made it seem much like home, there were many poor sailors there that had no home but the the sea. As for me I had a good home but thought of trying of what a home on the sea might be, It did not take more than a week before I began to realize what my ~~future home~~ ^{was to be} might be, It was any thing but pleasant which I will tell you about soon. Two days before we sailed, we had the order for to go to the shipping office for to get our outfits for a $3\frac{1}{2}$ years cruise, the old Shark (for that is what we nicknamed him) took us up stairs for to pick out his chest, mattress, blankets, & clothes for the voyage, My outfit all told amounted to \$95.25cts with 6 lbs tobacco & a bundle of matches thrown in, Some had more, some less just as he thought he required. We called these ship owners sharks because they charge more than an ordinary price for there slop clothes, It did not make any matter with me, for we were not to pay for them till the end of our cruise & as I thought of leaving the vessell

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some future time I intended that they would
have to whistle for there pay & I guess they have been
whistling ever since. The clothe were sold to
the natives for fruit & money, The tobacco were stolen
from me like many others, by the sailors who in playing
bluff (with cards) take one's & another's tobacco to play with
after loosing there own. The morning we started
away which was Nov 4th 1869 Mr & Mrs High shook
hands with all of our ships crew who were a stopping
there & bid us good cheer, then we went on our way
down down to the Bank for to sail on ^{the} wide Atlantic
& Pacific. All the way down to the wharf I could
not help but to think & to compare the home I once
had to the home that was laid out before me, &
of of the kind friends I were to leave perhaps
never to see again, & of the good times I had had.
such were I meditating to myself all the way down
hardly speaking to any one, it seemed most impos-
sible but such it were to be, it was to late, I had
signed ship articles, I could not back out, to go
I must, Well as we were all aboard with our
& hests, we cast of our cable ropes which held us
to the pier, then a tug boat pulled us out into the

stream we then set sail, such a jumping around
for the ropes it was a regular circus, the Mate would
sing out for to hoist such & such a sail & no one
would seem to know what rope to take hold of to
pull on & there we were all mixed up, there were about
of 16 sailors that knew the ropes. The Mate were a
hollering at us while the Captain would stand of
by himself & laugh at us. At this time I was wishing
myself on shore again for of such a flurry I thought
of what it might be in a heavy gale. After a while
we made out to get our square sails, stay sails, & gills
hoisted, the Captain then called of the roll call & he
found us all there at this same time the tug boat
let go our bough lines & left us to our destiny. We
had sailed out about 25 miles when a pilot
boat came across us & asked if we were all right
we answered in the affirmative (yes) when he left
us. Once more we were left alone. Just about
this time the 1st & 2nd Mates chose watches that is
the sailors stands in a group & the Mate picks
out one man & the 2nd Mate choose one, so on till
they they are all chosen, 8 men 2 boatswains & 2
mates in a watch. The Captain has a watch
of his own & that is from 12 to 1 o'clock at night

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When there is a severe gale. I was chosen in the
Larboard watch & in the Starboard boat. Our
regular duty was to stand mast head on the fore
legallant top. 2 hours for to look out for whales
2 hours at the helm to steer & 2 hours on the fore
bitts for a lookout at night time, at other times
we had to scrape & slush the masts down work on
rope making senates thumb lines & spin twine with
a spinning jinnie. In a storm all hands had to
take hold & manage the ship. We had 4 hours on duty
to work then 4 hours relief from the other watch that
we might, it made it come so that we would have
4 hours rest in a day & 8 hours with one interval at night
but the next day we had the reverse 8 hours in the
day & 4 at night. Our diet was a poor mans fare in
this shape, In the morning we had hot cofee & hard
tack (or scone) For dinner we had Bean soup twice
a week (the beans were so far apart that you would have to
swim in for them) with a piece of salt beef or pork.

Wheat bread twice a week with salt meat, Corn bread
once, Rice once, & Fish & potatoes once For supper
we had tea slops & hard tack no milk or sugar
in tea or cofee only a little molasses to sweeten it
with. It may well be imagine that our fareing

was far from being A No 1, As for being sea sick
was something I was not troubled with, the first
piece of ^{meat} they gave us came nigh making all hands sick
& they thought that would not do so they chucked it
over board & gave us what they had better, For water
we were stented we had a dipper that held two swallows
& that was all you could have at a time, as for salt
water the ocean was full of it help yourselves, but it was
not very agreeable to wash in for it would smart your
eyes, so I tried a little Yankee trick in this style.

In the morning when got up I would go to the pump
for a drink & instead of swallowing it I would go
forehead out of sight with it in my mouth & slob-
ber it in my ~~mouth~~ & wash my face, that was the
neatest way I could procure a toilet mornings,
To wash our clothes we would tie them to a line
& tie them over ~~the over~~ the sides of the vessel
for to soak then we washed them the best we
could, sometimes we could catch a little rain
water then we were all right, then only, for the
starch & ironing we thought ^{we} could not be so nice
so we let that go, Such as this we call a Sailors
happy life, he is always at home with his mate.
However, I was not exactly a sailor yet so I did
not feel quite at home but would give all my

¹⁰ old boots to be there, The third night we were out we had a little taste of a storm at sea, we had it to our hearts content. We were in the gulf stream where it is always squally, at first the wind blew high, then all hands aloft & take in sail, I felt like playing sick than to go aloft for it was the first attempt up aloft & I looked up many times before I started to go, but it was no use you had to go, The further south we sailed the higher the seas got to be till they got to be mountain high & as we rode in the trough of the seas it seemed that the next sea were to cover you all over but it would not for the vessel would ride up & down first in a hollow then on top off a wave when you would ^{see} a great abyss below, the water would break over the side of the vessel & wet you through & through our vessel tumbled round so that we thought she would strain herself & spring a leak which would prove fatal to us all for we could not pump ship for it was all we ~~could~~ could do to stand on our feet by holding on some prominent rope the sea washed our buckets & some barrells over board that we had on deck & we dare not let go our hold to save them for fear of going ourselves. As we had 4 boats swung up on davies along

the ships sides with oars, harpoons, tub line, bread
& Compass already to lower in the water at a mo-
ments warning in pursuit of whales, one sea broke
up against a boat & stove it up into kindling
wood, we lost everything, another sea broke off
our flying gibboom it was a hanging in the
water by 3 ropes until the next morning when we
had a chance to take it in on deck, Our man
at the lookout were taken from his post clear
aft & came nigh going overboard but for some one
who were close by to save him, it took 2 men at
the helm to keep straight, Such was a storm
at which we often had though not always so
fierce, It always gives us a wetting through which
makes us change our clothes for a dry pair, At times
we would have to change 3 different times &
when that was wet which was our last we would
in such stormy ^{weather} turn in our bunks with them on,
& in turning out at the next watch on deck we
would be all off a cold sweat, if it were fresh water
instead of salt it would be certain death to us.
One other night when it was my watch on deck
we had a storm approaching us & the Captain
sings out man the ship, then the Mate sang
out, stand by the stays, & as we stood along in a

12 in a line for to go aloft if the wind should in-
crease, a heavy sea came aboard on the weather
side where we were standing & took me as well as
3 others across the deck they were fortunate for to
have something in there reach to cling hold off but
for me it took me across the deck twice finally
I struck my head against a hatch way which stunned
me so that I had to go below ^{till} the next watch on deck
I was all right again, After passing the Gulf stream
where we were during these storms we met quite
pleasant & mild weather for we were nighing close
on to the Equator where the weather is hot as fire
& the sun hardly ever ceases to shine, Neptune comes
aboard then & visits all & each ones has to look out
for himself for he will be in Davie Jones locker.

Here on the Equator line we began to see different
kinds of birds such as the large albatrosses penguins
& the little tot of a wright whale bird which skims over
the water far away from any land, Then we see all
kinds of fish such as the Shark, flying fish,
black fish, cow fish, sun fish, & porpoises which
we used to catch a few, of the latter kind for
to eat which tastes like the meat of beef, In
taking off its hyde (which we call blubber) which
is an inch thick & boiling it down we used

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to get a gallon of oil from them. It used to
be exciting work to get these fellows. In the
first place a boat steerer would get out over
the boughs of the ship with a harpoon attached
to a pole & a long rope hitched to the pole & as
the porpoises would come up in schools along
side of the ships boughs we would throw the
harpoon into them, then 4 or 5 of the men on deck
would haul on the rope till we got them aboard.
many times we would loose them for as we would
get them half way up there flesh would tear away
from our hold & drop back into the water again.
Then the rest of the school would give chase
for them & suck there blood. The oil we got
was used for the cabin but could not be wasted
so much as to be allowed in the forecattle for
the sailors. We could turn in in the dark but we
did not all the same, we used to steal the coopers
pitch pine & spit it in strips & burn it for to turn
in by. As we had all these birds & fishes to look
at I felt more at home & contented besides we
had by this time got well acquainted with each other,
had learnt the ropes, & to do our duty that which
was necessary on board ship. We had a fiddle, an

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accordion, tambourine, harmonica, & the bones, for to
furnish us with a little music ~~for~~ to make us
lively, Well as were fast sailing to the southward
we were approaching closer on to Cape Horn which
we greatly feared on account of the prevalent hail
storms that prevails there. At last we reach there,
cold weather we begin to feel & the storm comes,
but before the storm comes which we anticipate to
see we are closely reefed sail, & head sails all in ^{enough} very
little canvas we dared to carry for the wind would
blow it away from us, We had this weather for a whole
months time when we had sailed in the southern
Ocean which was quite a treat to get out of such harsh
weather all this while we were around the horn we
had all our boats in on deck one we had turn upside
down & as we would come out on deck from our watch
below we would make for the boat to get underneath
it (for it was extended from the top of the coopers
bench to another one) so as to keep out from the storm.
All this time we had to turn in our bunks with
wet close on for it was necessary for to turn in, so
as to turn out in a moments warning, & what clothes
we had were all wet & no hopes of ever drying them,
As we had sailed out of this howling wilderness,

we soon got into fair weather by getting in the 15th
Southern so as to beat up around on the west coast,
The grand Pacific, we then were all over our
Cape Horn fever which is worse than to be sea sick
for you feel like dying ~~all the while~~. Soon we began to
see still larger fish than at first which they
call Whales, we had seen a few small specimen
of whales before such as the hump back & the fin
back Whales but now we saw the monsters, which
are called sperm the wight the sulphur bottoms
& the grey backs. We had often seen whales from
mast head & would lower boats for them to give
chase for them but nary a whale did we get our boats
were most to noisy in the water for it splash all
the time & when they here a noise they would scoot
under water out of site. We liked the fun in
chasing after them for it made little excitement
for us, we would lay back on ^{our} oars & pull many miles
away out off site of the ship we always had a little
compass in the boat so as to tell us in what di-
rection the ship laid in. One time we were in site
of 4 sperm Whales & we lowered 4 boats in pursuit
for them which was one a piece for each boat & if
a boat got hold of one then they would signal by

¹⁶ by a flag which would bring all the others, so our starboard boat which is the captains boat got close along side of a whale when the boatswain who is a colored Portuguese got forward in the bough of the boat & fired his harpoon at the whales which strikes the whales head, he should have thrown it for to strike in its neck where its cords are & the harpoon would held fast. Well the whale did not stop long enough for to receive a second blow but left the others boats seeing our good luck left there chase & came to our rescue only to save this man from drowning for as he throwed his harpoon he lost his balance in standing & fell over board, the boatmen caught hold of the hair of his head & got him in the boat, The Captain in his madness swore at the men in saving him & called him a jonah & said he out to be in the whales belly.

As we all got back aboard the Bark again we were making comments on the poor fellow, he was hissed from all quarters Officers & Sailors he was put amongst the sailors & the best sailor took his place, When we had been on the Pacific side for a week we had got into more extensive whaling grounds & while there we met a lot of whale vessels some were about to go home & others like ourselves had just got there, we would lower a boat with a crew & go aboard a ship & another

boat to another ship, & a third boat to a third ship & they the same, so in our ship we would have one boats crew & the other 3 boats crew, to belong to the ship would be from the other ships, if a wind would come up we would work just the same as though it was aboard our own vessel. This is what we call gaming. Ladies in going visiting calls it galloping, we would stay from 4 hours to 24 hours at a time this is the way we exchange reading give books & papers away for others, also exchange letters from home & besides we get the news from one place & another which is interesting to us. Feb 10th 1870 we had sailed up to Tacora island there we furled sails & anchored there then we lowered the Captains boat & crew into the water & they pulled for the shore. Right after the Captains boat followed the 1st Water boat & crew, we pull together for a $\frac{1}{2}$ mile when we reach the Island, then we get out & pull our boat up on shore & went where we were a mind to as a little freedom for 2 hours, my stars how our hearts leaped with joy to get a chance to get on solid ground after walking the ships decks for 3 months, we would run races, jump, & turn head over heels, barefoot and acting like we never saw land

¹⁸ before. There were a beautiful beach all around the island & an abundance of shells such that I had never seen before. The trees shrubs & flowers with their handsome foliage were such that I had not seen in good old Massachusetts, the grass & clover with their blossoms were the same & it put me right at home to look at them, there were a little cascade from among the high rocks running down into the ocean which were refreshing to look at, also to drink. there were a lot of wild sea birds that the Captain & Mate were a shooting off to take to the vessel. There were so much to look at that the 2 hours seemed like 10 minutes, & we had to scamper down to the boats again & pull off back to the ship again. Then they pulled us up on deck again, then we lowered the 2nd & 3rd Mates & their crew down in their boats & they took the same vacation that we had for 2 hours, when they came back they brought a lot of birds as we did. they were so plenty that they could afford to let some of them come down into the fore-castle that we sailors might have a taste of them. As we were aboard our noble Bark once more we hoisted up anchor & set sail & we were off again. You may well imagine that we had enough to

talk about for one while. though it was but 3¹⁹
weeks time when we anchored again. it was Feb 27.
this time we reach Saint Carlos island which we
reached Saturday afternoon. next day being Sunday
the Captain let us have $\frac{1}{2}$ day liberty for to go ashore, so
they lowered our two boats crew as they did before
into the water & we pulled for the shore again. this time
we found the island to be inhabited by the natives.
which numbered about 2,00 people they all worked
for an englishman which they call him governor for he
hires the whole of them to work for him. he has cattle,
cows, horses, sheep, pigs, hens, & dogs which runs at large
& he takes them in his little vessel to Valparaiso Chile
& sells them (Chile is famous for dogs, they have from 2 to 6 most
every family) Our Captain bought a whole beef which we
had all the time till it was gone & it did not take a
great while for it to go. As we went ashore the
natives looked at us with amazement wondering who
we might be for they don't very often see foreigners
soon we got a little acquainted with them then we
began to have a good time, they make a real hol-
ler day of a Sunday & drink Veno, that is Wine. &
they us to drink & we would go some where else & get
milk to drink & the two would not set well & so

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would make us sick. The natives here are
Spaniards & they are very coarse featured looking
with long black hair hanging down in two braids
Their huts are built of shrubs of bushes principally
with clay plastered on the outside & every time it rains
hard they have to patch it up here & there. Their furni-
ture consists of boxes for tables & joints of the back
bone of a whale which are as large as the water buckets
for stools. They get only 20 cts a day or what they
call dose rials so you see they cant afford much furni-
ture. It was a curiosity to me to compare the differ-
ence in the living of the S. Americans Spaniards
& the N. Americans Yankees. They in not knowing
what better is, are highly contended